

ANDROID™ NETRUNNER™ THE CARD GAME

ALL THAT REMAINS

The mining truck was a bumpy ride. They were in uncontrolled territory. No man's land, empty, desolate.

Nasir tapped Rachel on the shoulder. "We're here," he said through the comm, turning the PAD in his hand to show her their location.

The ground was pockmarked with small craters and moon stones. The lone and level crust stretched far away. There was no hatch or sign to be seen.

"How do we get in?"

"Finding the entrance would be like searching for a needle. The schematics showed that the pipes were only five meters below the surface," said Rachel. "So I brought some friends." She reached into her suit and pulled out three small, rounded discs of brushed metal.

"What are those?" asked Nasir.

"They go boom. Stand back." Rachel set the three disks on the ground in a triangle shape, several meters apart. "Back to the truck."

They reentered the vehicle, and Rachel backed it up to a safe distance. A small trigger device appeared in her hand, and she pressed the red button on it.

Nasir tensed, waiting for a huge eruption of dust and rock. Instead there was only a small puff of smoke. "Did it work?"

"Let's find out."

The ground had crumbled inward, revealing a polished metal dome. Rachel jumped down on top of it, and motioned for Nasir to follow suit. He did so, and landed on his hands and knees with a thud. "Oof."

"Stay close. It is possible that we are not alone."

There was a hatch on top of the dome. Together they pried at it, and begrudgingly it began to turn, in fits and starts. It opened. They climbed inside and clanged the hatch shut behind them; there was barely enough room in the airlock for both of them. The inner hatch flared green as the lock repressurized, and then it opened as well. A blue light shone from below them.

"Military all right," said Rachel. She dropped down the hatch into the room beyond. It was barely taller than she was. Nasir followed suit.

The glow was from a strip of small lights that ran around the base of the room. The walls were plascrete, smooth. The room was empty, but there were several hallways, likewise illuminated by strips of lights running down them. Nasir pointed down one. "It's that way."

They passed a bend in the hallway, and came upon another circular room. There were two other tunnels that lead to different parts of the facility, all three tunnels formed a triangular shape with the work area in the center of the room. It was filled with rows of ancient displays, below which were a series of knobs, keyboards, and ports and all covered with a thick layer of dust.



"This is it, the control room. This is where the reading was coming from!"

"No one has been here in years." Rachel glanced around. A thud sounded from somewhere deep within the facility. Another thud followed the first. Rachel raised her flechette pistol and moved to the entrance of one of the far tunnels. "Let's make this quick."

Nasir grabbed the old tevron jacks from his pack, and started brushing dust off the console. As his hand made contact with a control pad, a whirring sound started and the display lit up. The screen was a blank white.

"Okay, this is it!" Nasir's heart felt like it was beating outside of his chest. He plugged in the jacks, and started entering commands. "Wave field bypassed...there is definitely a fragment of code here. I need to jack in to make sure..."

There was a *pop-pop-pop* from the tunnel Rachel was standing next to, and she fell into a crouch. "Please drop your weapons and slowly exit the room," came a booming, projected voice. "We have you outnumbered and outgunned."

"Nasir, get what you need, now!" Rachel stood up and squeezed off a few rounds from her pistol down tunnel.

Nasir's hands flew across the various controls. The code was more dense and complex than he could have ever imagined for something so rudimentary, and it was drawing a massive amount of power. But he didn't have time to jack in. He attached a quantum drive and hit compress. "It's compressing, I need 30 seconds."

The wall next to Rachel erupted in a hail of bullets, chunks of plascrete flying into the room. She dived for the center console, rolled, and came up next to Nasir. "Hang on cowboy."

She reached into her suit and pulled out a small grenade. "Cover your eyes." Nasir did as he was told, and she pulled the pin and tossed it down the tunnel. There was a bang, and then a bright flare of light. As it faded, Nasir opened his eyes and felt the tears rolling down his face. There were still patches of light that danced in the air before him.

A man wearing a muresh skinsuit stumbled from the tunnel. Rachel pounced on him, smashing her fist into his neck, and following it up with an elbow to the back. The man collapsed with a gurgle, his automatic weapon clattering to the floor.

Another merc emerged from the tunnel, weapon firing crazily in all directions. *Pop-pop-pop-pop*. Nasir dove for cover, while Rachel launched an arcing kick that knocked the man's rifle from his hands.

She was a blur of movement, and then the second merc too fell to the ground. Another eruption of gunfire from the tunnel sent her stumbling backwards.

"We need to go, now!" He checked the compression. 97%. He felt Rachel grabbing at him. 98%. He tried to shake her off, but she was too strong. "Now!" He snatched the drive and hoped it was enough. As they left an explosion ripped through the control room, and they stumbled into the tunnel. His limbs were still intact, and Rachel pulled him to his feet.

They followed the constant blue lights back the way they had come. Around the bend. To the hatch. But another armed merc dropped out of nowhere as they reached the entry room, trying to cut off their retreat. He was bringing up his weapon when Rachel smashed into him, and they both went sprawling across the tiled floor.

Nasir glanced nervously back down the tunnel, then stuffed the quantum drive into his pack. Rachel and the merc were wrestling with each other; the merc had Rachel in a headlock, and she was vainly trying to elbow him. There was her flechette pistol, on the floor.

Just a few paces away. Nasir scrambled over and picked it up. It was lighter than he expected. The brushed metal grip was hard. Unfeeling.

"Nnnng!" gurgled Rachel. Her flails did not seem to be effective. He brought up the pistol, and pointed it at the two of them. Rachel was on top, blocking his view. He didn't have a clean shot.

"Nnnngggg!" He closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. The pistol hiccuped in his hand, and he almost dropped it with the resulting scream.

"Fracker," came the hoarse voice of Rachel over the comm. "Thank God you missed me." Nasir opened his eyes. Rachel was rolling off the merc, whose arms were limp and unmoving. Rachel stood up and gave the merc a kick. No response.

"Give me that!" The pistol was wrenched from Nasir's grasp, but Rachel's voice softened. "Give me a leg up, too."

Nasir boosted her up to the top of the hatch, and she pulled him up after.

— To be continued in
The Source Data Pack...



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